

Identifying the source of market distortion attack on major healthcare provider

Industry:

Healthcare

Goals:

- Investigate and determine responsibility for false blog article

Service:

Digital Forensics

Results:

- Determined author of blog post
- Produced evidence that led to the launch of a \$300 million lawsuit by the client against the alleged guilty parties.

About GRA Quantum:

GRA Quantum is a pioneering information security firm with a mission to build close partnerships with our clients, serving them as trusted advisors in building effective, proactive plans. We believe in comprehensive strategies designed to harden networks, deflect attackers, and rapidly recover from any incidents.

A leading healthcare management company is targeted on a popular online financial services blog. The blog article is written by an anonymous author and is loaded with false information about the company.

The Challenge

The article led to a near fifty percent drop in the stock price of the company soon after. Suspecting it was the victim of a "short and distort" market manipulation scheme, the client knew they needed to investigate.

The Solution

GRA Quantum incident responders were hired to conduct a web-based forensics investigation to identify the source of the article and to produce court-admissible evidence documenting their culpability.

The investigation included an examination of the metadata trail of the article in question as well as several other articles posted by an author using the same pseudonym.

This initial analysis led to further examinations into a number of professional and personal social media accounts, and eventually allowed our investigators to pinpoint the likely author of the article, his place of employment, and co-conspirators.

The Outcome

GRA Quantum generated over 800 megabytes of digital evidence documenting the entire process. Our investigators concluded the anonymous author was the employee of a foreign hedge fund. This person was also tied to several other "short and distort" articles anonymously posted to the blog.

The evidence produced by GRA Quantum, preserved in an air-tight chain of custody, eventually supported the launch of a \$300 million lawsuit by the client against the alleged guilty parties.